

Charter Review Committee, Loveland City Hall Chambers
May 2, 2018

Meeting called to order at 6:04pm by Ted Phelps

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call:

Present: Ted Phelps, Pat Mays, Mandy Reverman, Kip Ping, Todd Osborne, Lynn Zuch

Not Present: Todd Wilkowski

Others Present: David Kennedy, City Manager, Joe Braun, City Solicitor

Ms. Mays moved to excuse Mr. Wilkowski, seconded by Ms. Zuch. Yes – unanimous, No – None.

Mr. Osborne noted that the minutes needed amending, by adding “Joe Braun, City Solicitor” under “Others Present”. Ms. Mays moved to amend, seconded by Ms. Zuch. Yes – unanimous, No – None.
Approval of April 19, 2018 Minutes: Ms. Mays moved to approve, Ms. Reverman seconded. Yes – unanimous, No – None.

Open Forum:

Pamela Gross, 343 Huntington Dr., Loveland, reiterated an individual’s comments made during the prior meeting’s Open Forum regarding the Charter Review committee being classified a permanent committee. She also spoke about being in favor of term limits and believes special elections should be held when a vacancy on Council occurs.

Mary Ann Lynn, 128 Bares Run, Loveland, spoke on term limits. Believes dynamics are different (national versus local communities) regarding the percentage wanting term limits. Term Limits take away the will of the people. Those having served 2 or more terms have history. Regarding special elections – the cost of the special election is worth consideration.

Member of the audience asked about qualifications of serving on Council. Discussion ensued.

New Business

Mr. Phelps discussed broadcasting/streaming committee meetings. While it can be done, it hasn’t been done historically. While there are two committees who tape the meeting, no committees broadcast or live stream. The broadcasting/streaming would involve use of equipment which exists to record City Council meetings. Other resources would have to be expended, for example staff time to run equipment and website and there would be costs of transmission and storage. Any use of the equipment would also require committee members moving the meeting to the dais, which he felt would take away from a closer, working group meeting setting. Discussion ensued. Committee’s consensus is this topic is at the direction of Council.

Ms. Mays asked for information on other committee meetings and recordings. Discussion ensued. Mr. Osborne felt this topic should be a Council edict versus an individual committee decision.

Discussion then ensued on Article II of Charter, in particular terms of council and the notion of term limits. Ms. Zuch requested stats of the average term holder history, for the last 20-25 years.

Mr. Osborne discussed considering precinct representation of 9 precincts instead of term limits. It would give each precinct a voice, as well as preventing having 2 or more council members living in the same precinct or as happened several times over the last 40 years, even the same street. Suggested possible merging of neighborhoods within a precinct, such as Claiborne.

Ms. Zuch asked about representation – precinct vs at-large.
Ms. Mays noted it is difficult to get candidates.

Mr. Ping asked about staggered terms.

Mr. Phelps mentioned precincts work in large cities where Loveland is 10 square miles.

Mr. Ping noted that precinct representation is inclusive. Under representation works but doesn't describe Loveland vs at-large. Regarding term limits, we haven't had the necessity there doesn't mean term limits should be ignored. There are existing mechanisms showing term limits aren't necessary. The Boss-like member doesn't exist in Loveland.

Mr. Braun noted that in recent years, the entire majority has flipped twice, likewise mayors. Some communities have term limits; others don't. Blue Ash has a Ward system. Loveland is very civic minded but a shortage of interested individuals. Loveland is from Hamilton, Clermont and Warren Counties – the committee might want to include a requirement of representatives from all three counties.

Mr. Ping noted at the last election, Warren County had 100+ voters. Need mechanisms to avoid past problems. At Large system doesn't eliminate.

Mr. Phelps noted that with the current system, all Councilmembers represent all of the city.

Mr. Ping noted a precinct representation creates personality issues if representative is weak speaker, i.e. steamrolled vs the At Large system.

Ms. Mays noted that it is difficult to find people to run.

Ms. Reverman noted that everything takes away the will of the people (term limits/precinct representation)

Mr. Phelps observed that term limits create an artificial restraint/limitation of the voter, and derives from a certain arrogance based on the notion that voters are ignorant, ill-informed or uninformed such that term limits are necessary to save the people from themselves. He is leery of artificial mechanism to protect people from candidates who have prior council experience. Incumbents get elected for a job well done. A term limit of two terms would end up making the second term meaningless because the official won't face election again, he/she poses a risk of being either "lazy" (do nothing) or "crazy" (take outlandish or unpopular positions). Some in favor of term limits point to "career politicians" however in Loveland, all councilmembers hold non-city full time jobs; the avoidance of career politician's argument holds no weight. If term limits are really wanted by the community, it can be done by a citizen initiative.

Mr. Ping noted unless terms were staggered, by necessity, we could lose half of council and the other half two years later. It needs to be carefully implemented.

Discussion ensued regarding possible frustration of economic development, etc. if there is insufficient continuity or experience on city council. Discussion ensued regarding the term non-partisan.

Mr. Ping asked why is Loveland non-partisan. Mr. Osborne noted that all Loveland city charters have referred Loveland as being non-partisan. Mr. Braun pointed to Norwood and Reading as examples of partisan councils, which would not necessarily require primaries. Ms. Mays prefers non-partisan. Ms. Zuch noted that partisan would shift the focus on Loveland.

Mr. Braun brought up a possible addition to §2.02 – Eligibility, regarding a disqualification if person is finally convicted of a felony or has a sex offender/moral turpitude misdemeanor conviction. “An elector who is finally convicted of a felony or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude shall not be qualified under this section.”

Discussion ensued on the definition of moral turpitude. The working draft of the Charter now includes this redline. Mr. Phelps pointed to Ohio Revised Code §731.02 Qualifications, confirming the one-year residency requirement prior to running/eligibility.

Next meeting goal: Discussion of Charter §2.02

Next meeting will be May 17th, Loveland City Hall Chambers, 6pm.

Ms. Mays moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Reverman. Yes – unanimous, No – None

Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm

Minutes submitted by Todd Osborne, committee secretary